

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3 and 5-11 are amended. Support for the amendments to the claims is provided at least on pages 9 and 10, and Fig. 1, of Applicant's disclosure, as originally filed. Claim 12 is added. Support for the added claim is provided at least on page 11, and in Fig. 2, of Applicant's disclosure, as originally filed. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes that this application was filed on December 3, 2004. A rejection was mailed on March 5, 2007, to which Applicant responded with an Amendment on June 5, 2007. A Final Rejection was mailed on September 7, 2007, to which Applicant responded with an Amendment After Final Rejection on December 31, 2007. An Advisory Action was mailed on January 22, 2008 in response to which Applicant filed a Notice of Appeal, Petition for Extension of Time, and Pre-Appeal Brief Request For Review. In response to an April 21, 2008 Notice of Panel Decision From Pre-Appeal Brief Review, Applicant filed a Request for Continued Examination. Throughout the prosecution of this application, this Office Action, for the first time, raises a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, asserting that claims 1-3 and 5-11 are indefinite for including the phrase "sheet-like," which the Office Action indicates is unclear. Applicant does not consider this rejection timely. In an effort, however, to forward prosecution of this application, the claims are amended to obviate the rejection.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3 and 5-11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5-7, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP-A-2001-182978 to Teruo et al. (hereinafter "JP '978") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,507,847 to George et al. (hereinafter "George") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,190,104 to

Ikeda et al. (hereinafter "Ikeda"). The Office Action rejects claims 8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP '978 in view of George in view of Ikeda in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0108334 to Rapisarda et al. (hereinafter "Rapisarda"). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, among other features, the conveying robot comprises: a dust generation preventing seal structure provided to an articulated part of the arm; and a body which supports the arm and which has a vent hole arranged on a lower side of the first floor from which air in the body is downwardly discharged to the second chamber upon a descending operation of the body. The combination of JP '978, George and Ikeda cannot reasonably be considered to have suggested this combination of features.

The Office Action, on page 5, concedes that the combination of JP '978 and George fails to teach, or to have suggested, the above combination of features. The Office Action relies on Ikeda to overcome the deficiencies of the combination of JP '978 and George regarding at least the vent hole recited in claim 1. The analysis of the Office Action fails for at least the following reasons.

Ikeda teaches a method and apparatus for conveying a treatment object whereby a drive unit for driving a treatment object conveyor robot is deployed inside a vacuum chamber (Abstract). With reference to col. 8, lines 13-15, the Office Action alleges that Ikeda can reasonably be considered to teach some feature that the Office Action asserts corresponds to the recited vent hole. The cited portion refers to a shaft 42 of an externally mounted elevator mechanism 30 as having a hollow interior 45 in order that multiple electrical wires 48 can pass through the hollow shaft. Paraphrasing the claim language, the Office Action alleges that this hollow shaft can somehow reasonably be considered to correspond to a body which supports the arm and which has a vent hole arranged on a lower side of the first floor from which air in the body is downwardly discharged to the second chamber upon a descending

operation of the body. The analysis of the Office Action fails in its attempted showing of a corresponding structure for at least the following reason.

Ikeda only discloses a vacuum chamber 21 and a conveying robot 32 provided in the vacuum chamber 21 and carries an object 24 in the vacuum chamber 21 by a conveying arm 33 driven by a drive unit 34 in an airtight body 35, while the airtight body 35 is in turn moved up and down through a hollow shaft 42 by an elevator mechanism 30 positioned outside the vacuum chamber 21. An outer circumferential surface of the hollow shaft 42 is provided with airtight seal rings 44, so that an inner space of the vacuum chamber 21 is not ventilated. An inner space of the robot body 35 is connected to a space outside the vacuum chamber 21 through the hollow shaft therefore air in the robot body cannot be discharged into vacuum chamber 21. Such a construction in Ikeda requires a large space outside the vacuum chamber 21 for the elevator mechanism 30. This is in specific contrast to the subject matter of the pending claims which requires no space outside the case for moving the robot body up and down. More specifically, this combination of features cannot reasonably be considered to correspond to the specifically recited claim features regarding a body which supports the arm and which has a vent hole arranged on a lower side of the first floor from which air in the body is downwardly discharged to the second chamber upon a descending operation of the body as is positively recited, among other features, in independent claim 1. Ikeda, therefore, does not make up for the conceded shortfall in the application of JP '978 and George to the combination of all of the features positively recited at least in independent claim 1.

Rapisarda is not applied in any manner that would overcome the above-identified shortfalls in the application of the combination of JP '978, George and Ikeda to the combination of all of the features positively recited in claim 1 claim.

For at least the foregoing reasons, no permissible combination of the above-applied references can reasonably be considered to have suggested the combination of all of the

features positively recited in independent claim 1. Further, claims 2, 3 and 5-11 also would not have been suggested by any combination of the applied references for at least the respective dependence of these claims directly or indirectly on an allowable base claim, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.


Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of pending claims 1-3 and 5-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the varyingly-asserted combinations of applied references are respectfully requested.

Added claim 12 recites, among other features, wherein the vent hole comprises a downward gap between a body cover and a base cover of the conveying robot. There is no structure disclosed in Ikeda, or otherwise disclosed in the references, that can reasonably be considered to have suggested the specific combination of features recited in claim 12, in combination with all of the features positively recited in independent claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of 1-3 and 5-12 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Daniel A. Tanner, III
Registration No. 54,734

JAO:DAT/cfr

Date: October 7, 2008

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
